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Industrial Development Board

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Item 11 of the provisional agenda

TIMELY PAYMENT OF ASSESSED CONTRIBUTIONS

Establishment of a contact group of Member States

Proposal by the Director General

1. In the report of the Chairman of the open-ended discussion group on timely payment of assessed contributions (IDB.19/12, para. 35), it is stated that members of the Group "recognized that maintaining contact with the United States' authorities is necessary to keep abreast of the actual situation and any other developments. In this context, the idea of establishing a contact group was thoroughly discussed. Since the principle of its establishment is closely interlinked both to its composition and to the modalities of such a mechanism, a final decision in this respect should therefore take place when a comprehensive proposal is submitted by the Director-General to the nineteenth session of the Board."

2. The Director-General fully appreciates the work done and the efforts made by the open-ended discussion group on timely payment of assessed contributions and takes note of the views expressed on the subject of establishing a contact group.

3. The Director-General is also of the opinion that, as already recognized by the open-ended discussion group itself, such a contact group should be one of several elements of a multi-pronged approach to the issue of recovery of arrears. Its activities would thus complement those of the Secretariat in a coordinated fashion.

4. In fulfilling his mandate and exercising his executive responsibilities, the Director-General intends to take appropriate steps to secure the payment of unpaid assessed United States contributions to UNIDO within the broader context of reviving the interest of the United States in the Organization, and eventually, bringing the United States back to UNIDO as a Member State or, at the very least, as an observer. While the short-term objective is clearly the collection of arrears, the long-term goal is the return of the USA to the fold of the Organization.

5. In this regard, the acknowledgment by the executive branch of the United States Government of its obligation towards the Organization and its readiness and willingness to pay as soon as authorized to do so by the legislative branch is especially significant.

6. The contact group, if thus established, would provide a forum for continuing dialogue between the Member States of UNIDO and the United States

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Government, in particular through the participation and the active involvement of the United States Permanent Mission in Vienna.

7. In close consultation with the Director-General, the contact group would report to the Industrial Development Board and to the General Conference on progress made towards the recovery of unpaid assessed United States contributions.

8. With respect to the composition of the contact group, the Board may wish to consider establishing it on the basis of an extended geographical representation, but limited in size to a pre-determined number of participants. The Chairman of the group would be selected by the group itself.

9. While not formally a member of the contact group, the United States Permanent Mission in Vienna should be invited to participate in meetings of the group.

10. The Presidents of the General Conference and the Industrial Development Board and the Chairman of the Programme and Budget Committee could attend any of the sessions of such a contact group.

11. The contact group should endeavour to reach consensus on all its reports and recommendations.

12. Being an intersessional group, the contact group is expected to meet between formal sessions of the policy-making bodies of UNIDO. The contact group itself would set the frequency and duration of its meetings.

ACTION REQUIRED OF THE BOARD

13. The Board may wish to consider the adoption of the following draft decision:

"The Industrial Development Board:

"(a) Takes note of document IDB.19/14;

"(b) Requests the Director-General to pursue efforts to collect payment of unpaid United States assessed contributions to UNIDO and to renew the interest of the United States in the Organization;

"(c) Decides to establish a contact group whose composition, in accordance with paragraph 8 of the present document, is as follows: [to be inserted];

"(d) Also requests the contact group to operate in close consultation and coordination with the Director-General in defining ways and means of achieving its goals."